

CHALLENGE



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By Flood or by Bullets

RACISM KILLS



Milwaukee working class rebels against the racist murder of Sylville Smith



Working class relies on itself to organize transportation out of flooded areas

The flash flooding in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, home to the July rebellion following the racist police murder of Alton Sterling, is a capitalist disaster. The floods expose both the bosses' rotten profit system and the working class's potential to run society without exploitation.

More than 7,000 have been made homeless and are trapped in over-crowded shelters. Thirteen have died and 100,000 homes were damaged. Altogether, 400,000 people were devastated by the floods. Every one of them is a victim of capitalism.

"Natural" Disasters are Preventable

Nature may create massive downpours, but capitalism—a system run by and for the bosses—creates the disasters. After a historic 1983 flood of the Baton Rouge area, the result of an improperly built highway bridge, politicians and government agencies made promises to prevent future problems. But since the capitalist bosses don't view infrastructure for the working class as a lucrative source of profits, nothing happened. "Local offi-

cials began taking steps to improve flood protection systems such as raising highway bridges, upgrading levees and even approving a tax to fund a portion of the project by 2000. However, those efforts were not sustained" (veoci.com, 8/25).

The Comite River Diversion Canal could have protected people and homes, but the project—despite funding by workers' taxes since 2001—has been delayed for more than 30 years. This isn't new technology. The human species has been cutting canals since Mesopotamia around 520 BC.

Media Blackout, Government Disregard

To avoid distractions from the patriotic zeal of the Rio Olympics, the capitalist media has mostly ignored the worst U.S. disaster since Superstorm Sandy in 2012. As the New York Times' public editor admitted, "No doubt this is a busy news period....But a news organization like the Times... surely can find a way to cover a storm that has ravaged such a wide stretch of the country's Gulf

Can't Drown Workers' Rage

As workers were flooded in Baton Rouge, masses were rebelling in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. On August 13, just four days after the two-year commemoration of the Ferguson rebellion that followed the kkkop murder of Mike Brown, yet another Black worker was killed: 23-year-old Sylville Smith. As hundreds erupted in working-class rage, Governor Scott Walker activated the National Guard. Sylville's sister, Sherelle Smith, said, "The [cop] knew him personally from high school, and he still shot him" (The Root, 8/18).

Progressive Labor Party salutes the working class of Milwaukee for rebelling against racism! Any alleged looting and violence by workers pales against the systemic racist violence the bosses commit against workers on a daily basis. Sylville was killed in one of the most segregated U.S. cities, where 40 percent of Black residents and 32 percent of Latin residents live in poverty (Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, 9/16/15). And conditions are only getting worse. "The schools here are worse off. The employment prospects more bleak. Public transport is lacking. Rent is going up" (The Guardian, 8/19).

The local cops have a long history of racism that's getting harder for the ruling class to sweep under the rug. "Wisconsin incarcerates more black men per capita than any other state... more than half of the city's black men in their 30s have been incarcerated; the Milwaukee police were conducting illegal "body cavity" searches of black people in public... This is part of a broader pattern" (Salon, 8/18). The simmering anger against such racist injustices will inevitably reach a boiling point.

From Milwaukee to Baton Rouge, the working class needs to build multiracial solidarity and fight for a world without racism. Fight with the communists and join PLP!

Coast."

The local bosses in Baton Rouge were no better. One resident, Linda Smith, said there were no effective warnings: "We got no calls, no texts, no nothing." No one was evacuated from the area before the most serious rainfall began.

This disregard is blatantly racist. Black workers in Louisiana have an official unemployment rate of 9.5 percent, more than twice the rate for white workers. Baton Rouge, the state capital and a majority Black city, ranked first in the U.S. for HIV and

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OUR FIGHT

- ★Progressive Labor Party (PLP) fights to destroy capitalism and the dictatorship of the capitalist class. We organize workers, soldiers and youth into a revolutionary movement for communism.
- ★ the dictatorship of the working class — communism — can provide a lasting solution to the disaster that is today’s world for billions of people. This cannot be done through electoral politics, but requires a revolutionary movement and a mass Red Army led by PLP.
- ★Worldwide capitalism, in its relentless drive for profit, inevitably leads to war, fascism, poverty, disease, starvation and environmental destruction. The capitalist class, through its state power — governments, armies, police, schools and culture — maintains a dictatorship over the world’s workers. The capitalist dictatorship supports, and is supported by, the anti-working-class ideologies of racism, sexism, nationalism, individualism and religion.
- ★While the bosses and their mouthpieces claim “communism is dead,” capitalism is the real failure for billions worldwide. Capitalism returned to Russia and China because socialism retained many aspects of the profit system, like wages and privileges. Russia and China did not establish communism.
- ★Communism means working collectively to build a worker-run society. We will abolish work for wages, money and profits. While capitalism needs unemployment, communism needs everyone to contribute and share in society’s benefits and burdens.
- ★Communism means abolishing racism and the concept of “race.” Capitalism uses racism to super-exploit Black, Latin, Asian and indigenous workers, and to divide the entire working class.
- ★Communism means abolishing the special oppression of women — sexism — and divisive gender roles created by the class society.
- ★Communism means abolishing nations and nationalism. One international working class, one world, one Party.
- ★Communism means that the minds of millions of workers must become free from religion’s false promises, unscientific thinking and poisonous ideology. Communism will triumph when the masses of workers can use the science of dialectical materialism to understand, analyze and change the world to meet their needs and aspirations.
- ★Communism means the Party leads every aspect of society. For this to work, millions of workers — eventually everyone — must become communist organizers. Join Us!

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WHO WRITES FOR CHALLENGE?

The fact that CHALLENGE/PLP articles are not signed grows from PLP’s criticism of the cult of the individual in the former socialist Soviet Union and China. We do not want to encourage the possibility of building up a “following” around any particular individual.

While an article may be written by one person, the final version is based on collective discussion and criticism. Many times this collective discussion even precedes an individual’s writing of an article.

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Editorial

No Honor Among Imperialists

Widening War in Syria

Turkey’s August 24 assault on northern Syria, its first direct involvement in a five-year-old proxy war, points to even more instability in the Middle East—and U.S. imperialists’ precarious position there..

Turkey’s bosses, who are critical to U.S. control over the region’s vast oil reserves, have become unreliable allies. By sending tanks and troops into Syria and authorizing airstrikes over the border, Erdogan has “transformed this horrific war into a completely unpredictable battlefield” in which “the Russians would seem to have gained the most” (Der Spiegel, 8/26). The threat of a global conflict is closer to reality, as noted by the main-wing U.S. bosses’ mouthpiece of choice, the New York Times:

Because Syria has sucked in two of the world’s leading military powers, Russia and the United States, [the situation] could most likely be cleared only by a full-scale invasion. In the best case, this would require something akin to the yearslong American occupations of Iraq or Afghanistan. In the worst, invading a war zone where so many foreign adversaries are active could ignite a major regional war (NYT, 8/26).

For the millions of workers murdered and displaced in Syria, the horror of wider war is already a reality. Rival imperialists in the U.S., Russia and China are seeking to divide and conquer the world. With smaller imperialists like Iran and Turkey armed to the teeth on the big powers’ behalf, workers in these countries are slaughtered, forced to fight in the bosses’ interests, or turned into refugees.

Regardless of the nation, large or small, capitalists have no allegiance to the working class—including workers within the bosses’ borders. Their only loyalty is to the profit system—to control over markets and resources, and to racist, sexist super-exploitation. Communists in Progressive Labor Party have but one allegiance: to liberate the international working class by smashing the capitalist class, along with their borders, imperialism and racist police terror. Our aim is armed revolution by a working-class red army.

Why Turkey Matters to U.S. Imperialism

Bordering Greece to the west, Syria to the south, and Iraq and Iran to the east, Turkey bridges the Middle East with southeastern Europe and central Asia, and links the Black Sea with the Mediterranean. Controlling this vital crossroads was U.S. imperialism’s top priority after World War II. In 1947, when a communist-led armed insurrection against British and U.S. imperialism in Greece inspired workers across Turkey, the U.S. poured in money and weapons to strengthen the Nazi-like Turkish bosses.

In return, Turkey’s rulers condemned thousands of communist-led workers to prison, then helped the U.S. build its imperialist NATO military alliance. Turkey is now the Middle East’s largest economy and fields the second largest army in NATO, behind the U.S. The recent U.S. “peace” deal with Iran was intended to buy time for U.S. bosses to withdraw from the Middle East and rebuild its military, leaving Turkey’s bosses as their well-armed stand-in (CHALLENGE, 2/10). As explained by George Friedman, arch-imperialist advisor to the Pentagon, noted, “The only country capable of being a counterbalance to Iran and a potential long-term power in the region is Turkey” (Stratfor, 11/24/14).

The Turkish bosses’ recent actions call into question these long-term plans. Day by day, U.S. imperialism seems to be reacting to events more than

controlling them. Capitalist “allies” constantly fall out; any unity is temporary.

No Honor Among Thieves

On August 9, using alleged U.S. complicity in the aborted July coup in Turkey as a pretext, Erdogan visited his “dear friend,” Russian president Vladimir Putin, and promised to restore diplomatic and economic ties. On August 21, Turkey’s government suggested Russia’s military “might also wish” to use Incirlik Air Base, a critical NATO facility and the decades-long home to a U.S. nuclear weapons arsenal (Anadolu News, 8/20). Days later, U.S. Vice President Joe Biden traveled to meet with Erdogan and “smooth over” tensions (NYT, 8/25). Biden was snubbed, however. He was met at the airport by only the deputy mayor of Ankara, Turkey’s capital city. Unknown to the U.S., Turkey had already begun its invasion of Syria (Asia Times, 8/26).

Michael Maloof, a senior analyst in the U.S. Defense Department during the 2003 Iraq genocide, believes that Erdogan “has given up on NATO and even the EU and is pivoting more towards the East” (rt.com, 8/18). It remains to be seen how far Turkey’s bosses will go in playing U.S. and Russian bosses off against each other, as they did Allied and German bosses during World War II. What’s clear is that a Russia-Turkey alliance—and Turkey’s acceptance of Syria President Bashar al-Assad staying in power in a “transitional” role—could make it appear “as though the United States is the lone irrational outlier in Syria...However Russia responds to Turkey’s proposals, it will help determine the trajectory of the Syrian conflict” Stratfor (8/12/16).

In any event, the U.S. bosses have every reason to be nervous. In their eagerness to save face and downplay any splits with Turkey, a U.S. State Department spokesperson maintained that Biden and Erdogan had a “good and fruitful meeting”—one full day before they actually met (Sputnik News, 8/24).

Build PLP to Smash Imperialism

The proxy clash between U.S. and Russian imperialists over Syria has already created the largest refugee crisis in history. While U.S. imperialism stands in relative decline versus a resurgent Russia and a rising China, it still far outmatches them in military strength. The U.S. bosses will not give up their empire without an all-out war.

Meanwhile, smaller-scale capitalists in organized crime prey on vulnerable workers with impunity. The United Nations has documented women workers facing systematic rape, sexual abuse, and abduction in refugee camps. Gangs are selling pre-adolescent girls to wealthy men in Jordan, or burning their faces to make them undesirable to criminal militias backed by the U.S., Russia and Iran (Guardian, 7/25). Thousands of young men are conscripted at gunpoint as cannon fodder for those same militias.

The tasks of communists and friends of PLP include raising these ideas and selling CHALLENGE at our workplaces. Every CHALLENGE subscription sold is another nail in the bosses’ coffin. We must organize study groups to analyze a world in which every sharpening attack on our class is connected to inter-imperialist rivalry. Further, we need to organize rallies in solidarity with our class sisters and brothers in the Middle East. The more communist ideas become mass ideas among soldiers, students and workers, the more we can take these ideas all the way to seizing state power—to free our class once and for all!🇵🇸

Baltimore Escalates Fight vs. KKKop Murders

BALTIMORE, MD, August 14—Members of the Progressive Labor Party, along with students and workers in Baltimore, are waging an aggressive fight against the police murder of Black and Latin lives and the capitalist system that generates such injustices. Together with our friends, we have been part of the citywide protests against the police murder of Freddie Gray and the weekly Wednesday rallies for Tyrone West. On Saturday we joined a multiracial group of protesters that included the Baltimore Bloc, the City Bloc, and others, in marching through Artscape, the city's arts festival. These protests have been militant in nature—with many arrests at the July 16 and today's protests. We are showing that this racist system has to go and the working class will not stand by while the cops murder our sisters and brothers.

Korryn Gaines: Murdered by KKKops

This message of fightback is critical in Baltimore, where the cops and politicians have shown wanton disregard for Black and Latin lives. On August 1, in a racist and sexist act, the Baltimore County police murdered Korryn Gaines, a 23-year-old Black woman, and shot her 5-year-old son when they went to her home to serve an arrest warrant for a missing license plate!

Not too long ago, a Baltimore judge acquitted three cops, and prosecutors then dropped charges against the rest of the racist police gang who murdered Freddie Gray on April 12 last year. This outrage occurred at the same time as the police murders of Alton Sterling and Philando Castile. Filled with rage at these injustices and countless others worldwide, we took to the street, joining hands with students and workers to bring revolutionary changes.

Protesters Defy Orders

As expected, the police state apparatus came well prepared to smash our fight back. When some demonstrators used a decoy protest to march onto the I-83 ramp (closed for Artscape) and then moved onto the northbound lane of the Jones Falls Expressway to block traffic, they were tricked by the cops. The cop had asked them to



Baltimore protesters block I83 during Artscape to protest police murder.

let an ambulance through, and when they complied, they found out that the “ambulance” was the police and their wagons! The protestors didn’t let this stop them however; they militantly locked arms in defiance of police orders to stop!

Turning Arrests into Talks of Communism

Echoing the escalation of police terror in the mass roundup of protestors in Baton Rouge, dozens of cops encircled everyone, including onlookers, legal observers, and photographers. None were allowed to leave. Police then swept up everyone in a mass arrest of 65 residents, including 10 youth. All were handcuffed, kept in vans in the heat, without water for 7-14 hours, and eventually released with fines and citations.

While detained, a young member of Progressive Labor Party successfully helped turn that awful situation into its opposite, into something positive. He and the five others in that particular wagon talked quite a bit. The young comrade helped everyone gain valuable insights about state power today, explaining how the police, jails, government and courts are really a system of organized violence to suppress the working class. He also contributed another very important understanding, that the working class can and must smash this capitalist state, and build a state of a new type, run exclusively by the working class, to lead a communist society in which we will struggle successfully to completely defeat the legacy

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In Memory of Ezell Ford

Health Workers Fight KKKops

LOS ANGELES—Progressive Labor Party led 16 healthcare workers and friends from the community in a rally outside our clinic against racist police murder. The mother, grandmother, and three siblings of Ezell Ford, who was murdered by the police, also joined our small but spirited contingent.

At the start, a few workers were concerned about marching and doing militant chants like “Rise up, Resist, need no killer cops, no jails, The whole damn system is guilty as hell” and “Racist cops you can’t hide, We charge you with genocide.” However once we got started, we received overwhelming support from cars and people passing by. One neighborhood woman whose cousin was murdered by LAPD joined us and stayed the entire time. She gave us her contact and said that next time, she would invite all of her family and friends. The overwhelming support from the community emboldened us and erased any initial fears. This was our first rally, but it will definitely not be our last!

We held our rally to commemorate the two-year anniversary of Ezell Ford’s murder, whose family we have ties with. To make matters worse, the LAPD murdered 14-year-old Jesse Romero



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LA Summer Project Energizes Antiracist Fightback

LOS ANGELES, July 28—What a way to end our summer project! We started with a rally in support of the anti-racist fighters who were arrested for fighting back against the KKK invasion of Pearson Park on February 27th. While the KKK scum who stabbed 4 people were let off, these 7 anti-racists were arrested and are being charged with combinations of misdemeanor assault, battery and resisting arrest. Before the hearing, a crowd of Progressive Labor Party (PLP) members and friends as well as anti-racists from various Unitarian Universalist churches rallied for an hour chanting: "The Cops, the Courts, the Ku Klux Klan: All a Part of the Bosses' Plan!" We met many people including a lawyer who asked if he could work pro bono as a part of the Anaheim 7's defense. Afterwards we went into the courtroom to show our support for the defendants. We made a united exit en masse when the hearing ended. Reducing the courtroom audience by half was a dramatic end to our summer project.

Our court action was the culmination of the 2016 PLP Los Angeles Summer Project. The project started with a fundraising party. The support from our friends was very uplifting. We spoke about the importance of struggling together against the government's racism. During the project, members and friends participated in Challenge sales, study groups, rallies, a movie night, and a forum.

We struggled with each other to put together a sharp, clear forum on the elections. We met and practiced multiple times. The final presentation was humorous and clear on our line that elections are not the answer. Afterward we had discussions with our friends about the alternative to voting; fighting back on our jobs, in the schools, and in the streets.

We also had a demonstration outside LA County District Attorney Jackie Lacey's office demanding that she take action against the police murders of Ezell Ford and Brendon Glenn (see photo). At this rally, everyone was asked to speak on the bullhorn. This was great practice for our members who did a good job of highlighting the



hypocrisy of the "justice system" that promotes racist police brutality and murder.

A two-part study group read and discussed "The Road Not Taken," a PLP pamphlet (excerpted from The Shaping of Black America by Lerone Bennett Jr.) explaining how race and racism were created by the colonial ruling class to enforce slavery. Many comrades and friends were amazed at the brazen way these colonial slave owners created laws to separate the previously united white indentured servants and Black slaves. We discussed how these rulers had to create laws prohibiting relations between Blacks and whites because these relations were the norm and the Black and white unity threatened the power of the colonial elite. The colonial slave owners used the churches, the media and most of all force against both whites and Blacks for centuries before the ideas of race and racism became as accepted as they are today! This idea that racism had a starting point in history, the colonial period in the Americas, and therefore will have an ending point, communist revolution, was the powerful conclusion of our study groups.

At our movie night, we watched "Central Park 5". It was about a group of young Black men in New York City who were falsely accused of raping a white woman. We had a discussion about how the capitalist media demonized these young, Black men and how the bosses continue to do this today in order to separate workers. Past racist prosecutions such as this are similar to our current struggles against racist cops and the Klan. The entire "criminal injustice" system is guilty of racism. We need the courage to confront the law when necessary to protect our class brothers and sisters.

Overall our summer project was successful. We struggled to get our friends to come out to many events, and all of our members participated in most everything. The rally at court energized us to continue our fight against the prosecution of the anti-racist fighters who fought the KKK in Anaheim. Our fight against the racist system was given a jolt by this summer project and our understanding of the role of racism and police terror was deepened. We look forward to another year of struggle, strengthened by our summer's work.☺

Baton Rouge Flooding: Capitalist Disaster

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AIDS case rates in 2013. The vast majority of these cases are in the segregated Black working-class neighborhood of north Baton Rouge, where one-third of Black workers live below the poverty line, and only 46 percent of Black men have graduated from high school (New York Times, 7/11).

Eleven days after the flooding began, President Barack Obama praised the notoriously negligent Federal Emergency Management Agency. In 2005, during deadly Hurricane Katrina, FEMA stopped rescue missions and food from reaching families and put people in trailer homes with toxic levels of formaldehyde. More than a decade later, people are still living in these poisonous tin cans!

Learning From Katrina

Some flood victims in Baton Rouge may have already suffered from the racism during Katrina; the city provided refuge for displaced families from New Orleans. Katrina exposed the racist core of capitalism, and how the bosses use disasters for the working class as an opportunity to develop fascist policies for the not-so-distant future. Understanding Katrina can prepare the working class for what to expect and fight today.

The capitalist class and their politicians turned the unnatural disaster Katrina into the mass mur-

der of more than 1,400 mostly Black workers. New Orleans was treated as a war zone. Liberal politicians like Hillary Clinton, now the Democratic presidential candidate, called for expanding FEMA's powers and withdrawing troops from Iraq for deployment in New Orleans. Military units were brought in to protect private property and join the police in harassing what was left of the city's Black population.

But Black workers and youth took matters into their own hands. They provided water, food, diapers and rescue efforts for families and neighbors. This was working-class collectivity at its best. Meanwhile, the racist capitalist media condemned the workers as looters and violent criminals.

In solidarity with workers in New Orleans, Progressive Labor Party led a summer-long project with political actions, cleanup, and communist ideas, all while the city was still under military occupation. In other cities, PLP organized relief efforts and spread communist politics among refugees in Texas and the Midwest. We mobilized hundreds of workers to attack the liberal bosses' plan to expand the military occupation. Our slogan: "From New Orleans to Iraq, the working class must fight back!"

Our work in New Orleans taught us how to

strengthen solidarity with our working-class sisters and brothers in Baton Rouge. We are following the leadership of these workers, whose instinct for collectivity is apparent as they organize food, shelter and support for each other. As education workers and students head back to school in cities where our Party has concentrations, we can expose the racism of capitalism by making Baton Rouge a center of fightback.

Black Workers' Revolutionary Leadership

In July, thousands of workers and youth in Baton Rouge rebelled against the local police murder of Alton Sterling. Sterling's murder was no accident. As one Black worker told PL, "The police who shot him knew him. Knew who he was. These were the same police that always patrol the neighborhood. They knew what they were doing."

The task of Progressive Labor Party is to help open the floodgates of working-class revolt and channel it toward communist revolution. Baton Rouge is yet another example of Black workers playing the lead role in our multiracial fight for an egalitarian world.☺

KKKapist Courts Declare Cops Innocent

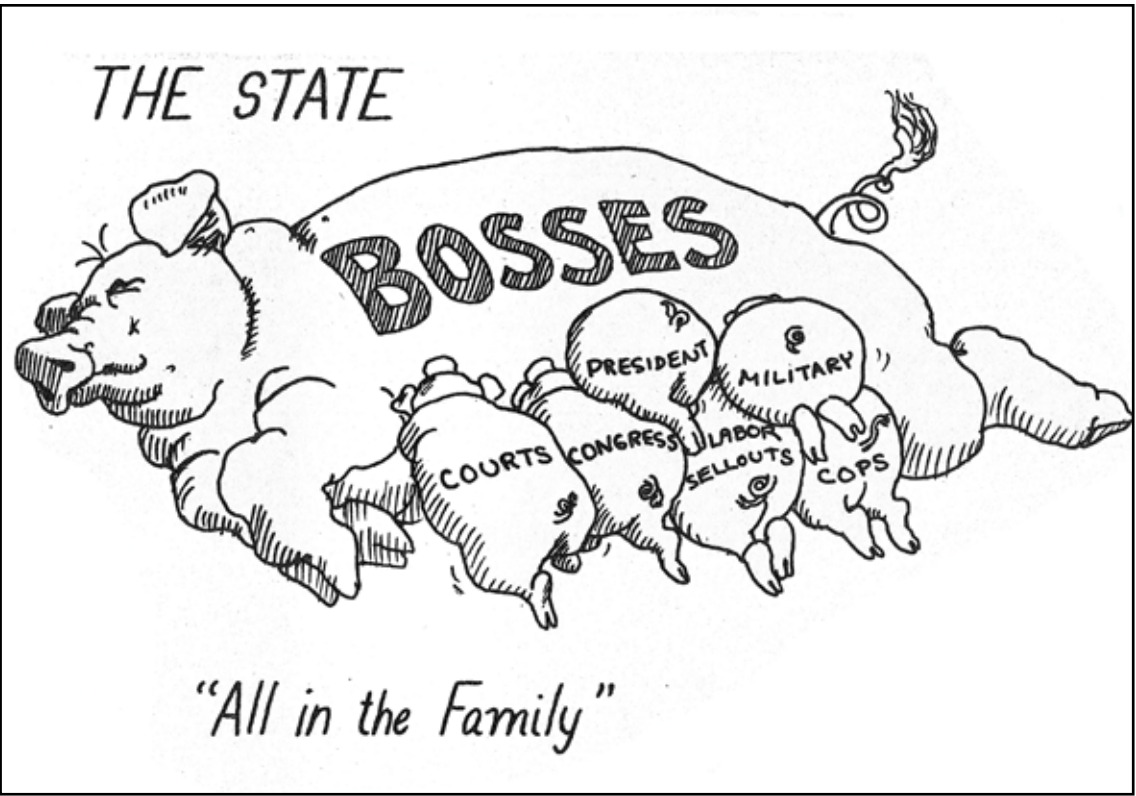
In June 2016, all cops responsible for Freddie Gray's murder were let off the hook. This monstrous miscarriage of justice is just one of many; Mike Brown, Tamir Rice, Kyam Livingston, and too many others have failed to get justice. Why does this racist injustice happen nonstop? Non-indictments and exonerations of kkkops result from deliberate decisions made by the courts even before the trial. The courts and cops work together to ensure that the racist terrorization of Black, Latin, and immigrant workers continues and to thus protect capitalism. It is not a failed or corrupt system—this is just capitalist government at work.

In April 2015 Freddie Gray, a Black man in Baltimore, was killed in transport to the police station. His hands and legs were shackled while in transport. He arrived at the station in a coma with a broken neck and injured spinal cord, and died soon after.

Six cops, both Black and white, were responsible for this murder. A rebellion in Baltimore and mass protests around the United States forced the government to indict all these cops. However, not a single one was found guilty.

The decision to find them all not guilty was made in September 2015 when the judge, a Black man, ordered the cops be tried separately rather than as a group. The trial against cop Porter ended in a mistrial. Cops Nero, Goodson, and Rice were found not guilty. The remaining charges against cops Miller and White were dropped. So why were there separate trials? As separate defendants there is no way that any of them could have been convicted. Unlike workers, each kkkop is considered innocent until proven guilty, and there were no witnesses to testify to the murder. The only live witnesses would be each other, and there is a code of silence among cops. The only witness who was not a cop, Freddie himself, was dead.

Freddie's death alone acts as irrefutable testimony that, as a group, the six murdered him beyond the shadow of doubt. Knowing that only, as a group, could the six murderers possibly be found guilty, the decision to try them separately made it a foregone conclusion that either, a) each would be found not guilty, b) there would be a mistrial, or c) the charges would be dropped—all



of which happened. These non-guilty verdicts were intentional!

Whether tried individually or as a group, the bosses own the government. It's their courts, cops, and congress. Even if they were tried as a group, the racist court is set up to punish workers to the max and let police off the hook, and this case is a perfect example.

The same set-up was present in the sham trial of George Zimmerman in 2012, the wanna-be cop who shot and killed Black teenager Trayvon Martin in Florida simply because Trayvon was walking home while Black in Zimmerman's neighborhood. When Zimmerman called 911 they told him to back off, but he refused to do so, instead confronting and killing Trayvon. There were no (live) witnesses so self-defense could not be disproven. Self-defense grants immunity to many killers. Instead of trying to keep the level of self-defense suitable to the intensity of the threat, which could be as little as a misinterpreted look, the law permits escalation to the maximum response: homicide.

Capitalist Justice: Cops Innocent, Workers Guilty

The U.S. injustice system is as fair as a loaded die. Workers are always presumed guilty while police are always innocent, even after proven guilty. These exonerations say to Black and white workers that Black workers can expect to be killed with impunity, and it says to cops, go ahead and keep killing Black workers, and we will do our best to keep you from being found guilty. According to the Washington Post's national database, police terrorize and kill twice as many white workers as Black workers in numbers, though Black workers are killed at a disproportionate rate because of racism. These murders are a necessary part of capitalism; they keep workers afraid to fight back against exploitation and oppression. This injustice must be shut down by mass action by an outraged working class, both Black and white, along with all other workers, and replaced by a communist system run by workers in which justice is possible.✪

Baltimore Escalates Fight vs. KKKop Murders

Continued from page 3

of huge inequities and, in their place, achieve a fully egalitarian world!

Turning Reform into Revolution

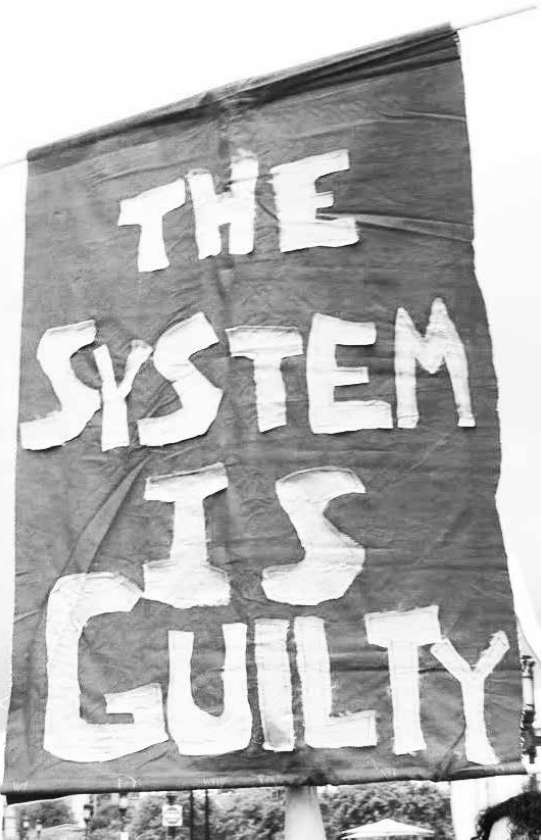
Although militant in their actions, some protestors called for reformist measures to end police brutality. Some demanded that citizens be added to internal police trial boards because the community has a "right to self determination and a right to have an impact in the process of bringing a sense of justice... into their own community." Some protestors also called for a "reallocation of 10% of the policing budget away from militarization of local police forces and mechanisms of community control and surveillance and towards community programming." These demands are similar to those of the mass struggle to bring about police reform at the state level during Maryland's legislative session this year. But those efforts, which engaged hundreds in protests, press conferences, and lobbying, led to only minor changes in the laws that protect the police from being held accountable.

The capitalist bosses and politicians will not rein in the racist cops that protect their exploitative system through violence and intimidation. Instead, PLP members fight for a world without pris-

ons and racist police. That can only be achieved through communist revolution. As a result of the PLP's engagement in these struggles, these revolutionary, communist ideas have begun to enter the consciousness of many who never considered them before

Say No to Capitalist Masters

No reforms under capitalism can eliminate racism, state sanctioned police intimidation and brutality, or the profiteering system that keeps these in place. The growing movement against the police and racism is facing a ruling class ever more desperate to heighten racism and support "law and order." Listening to Trump and his supporters reminds us of the "tough on crime" rhetoric of Republicans Reagan and Nixon that ushered in the War on Drugs and the era of mass incarceration, followed by Democrat Bill Clinton's 100,000 more cops and "Three Strikes and You're Out" that accelerated mass incarceration and criminalization. Democratic and Republican politicians agree on serving their capitalist masters by deepening racism and repression in the service of maximum profits. Revolutionary leadership from PLP must expose both parties as they hypocritically call for reform. We must lead the working class to the conquest of state power through communist revolution.✪



LETTERS

We encourage all CHALLENGE readers to send in letters and articles about their experiences fighting the bosses worldwide.

No Way Around Boots on the Ground

“Russian Imperialism Strikes Back” (CHALLENGE, 8/31) leads with a quote from a Russian official regarding modern warfare that minimizes the use of ground forces. Opening the editorial with this quote created the impression that the major imperialists can avoid having to put large numbers of troops on the ground. It reinforces the misleading idea that technology is more important than politics.

Warfare is continually changing—long-range missiles, cyber attacks, and drones are all ways the major capitalists have of killing people from long distances. The thing that hasn’t changed is the need for boots on the ground to hold and consolidate power.

The last major war the U.S. won was World War II. When I was in West Germany as an Army private in the early 1980s, there were approximately 500,000 U.S. troops in a country the size of Oregon, nearly 40 years after the war. We would go on maneuvers with columns of armored personnel carriers, tanks and artillery pieces across the German countryside. We’d set up in farmers’ fields and along country roads, basically wherever the U.S. wanted. We drove freely through thousand-year-old towns without fear of being shot, as the Army would “compensate” property owners for damage caused by our vehicles that plowed through. That is what winning a war looks like.

Since WWII, the inability of the U.S. military to win the fight on the ground has defined the U.S. wars in Korea, Vietnam, Iraq and Afghanistan—every major war the U.S. has fought in the last 60 years. Losing a lost ground war means giving up half the country (Korea) or being forced out (Vietnam). Same for Iraq and Afghanistan, where the U.S. was mainly contained within its compounds, venturing out on fewer and fewer missions because of the inability to win working-class soldiers and Marines to willingly die in the numbers it would take for the U.S. bosses to prevail.

Winning ground wars requires an army with a relatively high level of political commitment, at least higher than the other side. As the CHALLENGE editorial points out, the Russian chief’s hope that they can succeed with asymmetrical warfare reflects wishful thinking in the face of the Russian rulers’ political and strategic problems, a fact the U.S. bosses are also struggling with. The editorial would have been better if that point had been made clearly.

★★★★★



SELL, READ,
WRITE FOR,
UTILIZE
CHALLENGE



Milwaukee working class rebels against the racist murder of Sylville Smith

Big Terrorists Fund Little Terrorists

In “Capitalism in Crisis,” (7/27) CHALLENGE said, Hillary Clinton is “leading the charge for a more aggressive U.S. intervention in Syria.” Whenever the proxy war in Syria is mentioned, let’s be clear that all the Turkish and U.S. backed rebels that were vetted are aligned with terrorist groups such as al-Qaeda’s Jabhat al Nusra, the Turkistan Islamic Party, or Jaish al Islam. The Civil War in Syria basically boils down to four sides: The Kurd’s and their allies to the north, the Syrian government, Islamic State (ISIS), and a hodge podge of group the Western press dubs “the rebels”.

These rebels either tactically coordinate with, organize attacks with, strategically plan with, share weapons with, fight side by side with, and all around depend upon organizations considered terrorists by the big terrorists like the U.S.’s NATO and Saudi Arabia’s Gulf Cooperation Council. These groups are responsible for crimes as horrible as filming and uploading themselves beheading a ten-year-old Palestinian boy who they accused of being a spy or soldier. They attempt to impose their fascistic religious rule wherever they conquer land and are vehemently anti-working class. One carefully vetted group gave a high tech Russian T-90 tank that they had captured to Jabhat al Nusra, because their religious court legally ordered them to do so!

The U.S. relies upon the myth of a moderate opposition when they discuss regime change in Syria because they don’t want their working class knowing that they same organization that killed thousands in the terrorist attack on Sept. 11, 2001 are now being directly and indirectly supported by their imperialist ambitions. Al Zinki, the group responsible for beheading the child, was a carefully vetted group that left the umbrella of the U.S. with all the weapons they were covertly provided with and have fully aligned with the jihadis fighting the Syrian Government. These groups routinely shell the Kurds with their artillery and have killed hundreds of Kurdish civilians since they hate the Kurds as much, or possibly more than, they hate the government. They have wiped out whole villages in northern Syria and transplanted various other Sunni groups to take them over in a new form of colonialization.

There are no good sides in the proxy war that is the Syrian Civil War. Whoever wins, the working class there will still lose. The Kurds espouse left ideas, and still make deals to buy oil from ISIS and have never discussed the need to abolish capitalism. Whenever we discuss Syria, we need to hit home the point that the U.S. is so hypocritical that they are actually arming, funding, and helping al Qaeda because it is geostrategically opportunistic to do so now. Hillary wants regime change there which means that she wants these Jihadi groups to take over and murder countless Yazidi, Chris-

tian, and Alawite workers. We need to expose these imperialists for what they are, murderers for the highest bidder.

★★★★★

Shaming Capitalists Out of Profiteering? Not!

Under the headline, “Advocates hope that shaming drugmakers will stop price hikes,” major news corporations like PBS recently reported that a law is being considered in California to require drug companies to announce planned price hikes in advance. As though drug companies have a sense of shame that will inhibit their tremendous profit grabbing if they are forced to make them public.

Corporations claim that they are people in order to obtain legal protections that people theoretically enjoy. But companies are not people, even though people run them. If they were, they would have not only the “rights” that people are supposedly entitled to, but they would also acquire the responsibilities and obligations that are forced on people. As it is, corporations do enjoy the rights and privileges that people actually rarely do, but have none of the responsibilities and obligations that are said to go with them. For example, corporations are not required to pay to rescue banks from failures or clean up rivers they pollute with toxic chemicals. It is the working class who is forced to pay with our taxes and bear the health effects.

The drug companies, naturally, oppose the “shaming” bill, and declare, “It would lead to dangerous drug shortages.” That is, the drug companies will hold for ransom medicines that many people need if the legislature requires them to publicize their outrageous price hikes.

And that is the way capitalism works. Either the capitalist government is allowed the drug companies to make unconscionable profits, or they can try to force them to make smaller profits and, as a result, cause patients to suffer who need the medicines to stay alive.

A system built on the foundation of profits, along with the myth that everything good for the working class will follow from that, is a system that cannot do anything but protect profits. Even if there were legislators who really did try to represent the interests of the working-class public, they would be completely helpless in the face of the way the system works every day.

On the other hand, if drugs were created and distributed by a workers’ government made by and for the working class that’s based on meeting our needs, then and only then could this problem be solved. That system is communism. This is but one example of the way the profit system kills and that communism would provide life and health.

★★★★★

Healthcare Workers Fight KKKops

Continued from page 3

two days ago. Hundreds marched in response and PLP will be participating in continued vigils and demonstrations around both Ezell and Jesse's killings.

These murders are added proof that we need to smash capitalism. As workers get angrier over these killings, the bosses respond with fake solutions to calm us down. They talk about diversifying police forces, but LAPD shows us that this will not erase the inherent racism in capitalism. LAPD not only boasts the most diverse police force but also boasts the most people killed by police this year, mostly Black and Latin youth. Clearly more "police of color" is not a solution to systematic racism. No reforms can fix the police because the police aren't broken; they're working exactly as they were set up to do serve the interest of the ruling class. They terrorize Black and Latin workers to keep the working class from fighting back and ultimately to allow capitalists to keep exploiting us to make super profits.

As capitalism deteriorates, workers get angrier and police terror increases. More workers than ever are disillusioned, with record numbers see-



ing politicians as misleaders and refusing to vote. Workers see that capitalism cannot provide a good life and rebellions are flaring up all over the world. The ruling class is preparing for wider rebellions: under Obama local police departments have increased militarization more than 24-fold and 2016 is on pace to have record numbers of murder-by-kkkop.

Being revolutionary communists, it is our job to expose the police and turn the sparks of rebellions into the fire of revolution. In LA, we are doing just that. A few more co-workers at the healthcare clinic are now receiving CHALLENGE. One co-worker and student came to a sermon that a comrade gave at his church on the origins of racism and police terror this past weekend. The next step will be developing a study group with hopes of building a small healthcare club.

The mostly Black and Latin workers of this clinic and surrounding neighborhood represent the future of our movement. If we can continue to organize in our work places and mass organizations and connect them with the class-struggle, we will have a chance of growing our Party and building a movement that will one day smash this racist profit system once and for all.✊



RED EYE ON THE NEWS . . .

Below are excerpts from mainstream newspapers that may be of use for our readers. Abbreviations: NYT=New York Times, GW=Guardian Weekly, LAT=Los Angeles Times

UN admits fault: thousands killed through cholera

NYT, 8/18 — ...Since a cholera epidemic... imported by the United Nations peacekeepers began killing thousands of Haitians nearly six years ago,...a confidential report sent to [UN Secy.-General] Ban Ki-moon....stated plainly that the epidemic "would not have broken out but for the actions of the United Nations...."

...After more than five years of high-level denial of any involvement or responsibility...the outbreak has killed at least 10,000 people and sickened hundreds of thousands. Cholera victims suffer from dehydration caused by severe diarrhea or vomiting....

The first victims lived near a base housing 454 UN peacekeepers...and waste from the base often leaked into the [Meille] river. Numerous scientists have since argued that the base was the only plausible source of the outbreak — whose death toll... could be much higher than the official numbers state....

...the UN's cholera eradication program has failed. Infection rates have been rising every year in Haiti....No major water or sanitation projects have been completed....

...A quarter of the sites run by the peacekeepers...were still discharging their waste into public canals as late as 2014, four years after the epidemic began....

The redress demanded by families of the 10,000 people killed and 800,000 affected would each \$40 billion....and that figure does not take into account "those certain to die and be infected in the years ahead."

Yemen: U.S. imprint on every life lost

NYT, 8/17 — A hospital associated with Doc-

tors Without Borders. A school. A potato chip factory....All were bombed...by warplanes belonging to a coalition led by Saudi Arabia, killing more than 40 civilians.

The United States is complicit in this carnage....selling arms to the Saudis....

...The Saudis and their coalition...simply do not care about killing innocent civilians....

...The war has killed more than 6,500 people, displaced more than 2.5 million others and pushed one of the world's poorest countries from deprivation to devastation....

...Obama has sold the Saudis \$110 billion in arms, including Apache helicopters and missiles.... [and] has also supplied the coalition such indispensable assistance as intelligence, in-flight re-fueling of aircraft and help in identifying appropriate targets. Experts say the coalition would be grounded if Washington withheld its support. Instead the State Department...approved the potential sale of \$1.15 billion more in tanks and other equipment to Saudi Arabia to replace items destroyed in the war....

..."There's an American imprint on every civilian life lost in Yemen."

Capitalism is failing worldwide

NYT, 8/7 — [Capitalism's] slow growth is not some new phenomenon, but rather the way it has been for 15 years and counting. In the United States, per-person gross domestic product rose by an average of 2.2 percent a year from 1947 through 2000 — but starting in 2001 has averaged only 0.9 percent. The economies of Western Europe and Japan have done worse than that.

Dead? Student loans still must be paid!

NYT, 7/4 — Amid a haze of grief after her son's unsolved murder last year, Marcia DeOliveira-Longinetti faced...endless tasks....And then there were the college loans....

...A New Jersey state agency...said,"...the authority has determined that your request does not meet the threshold for loan forgiveness. Monthly bill statements will be continue to be sent to

you...."

New Jersey's loans...come with extraordinarily stringent rules that can easily lead to financial ruin. Repayments cannot be adjusted based on income, and borrowers who are unemployed or facing financial hardships are given few breaks....

...New Jersey can garnish wages, rescind state income tax refunds, revoke professional licenses....

"It's state-sanctioned loan-sharking," a bankruptcy lawyer said. "The New Jersey program is set up so that you fail...."

The program's regulations have destroyed families' credit and forced them to forfeit their salaries....

Another borrower, Chris Gonzalez, could not keep up with his loans after he got non-Hodgkin's lymphoma and was laid off by Goldman Sachs....New Jersey sued him, seeking \$266,000 in payments, and seized a state tax refund he was owed....

The agency...said..."we must...meet our fiduciary duty to our bondholders."

...Giving borrowers a break would make the bonds sold to finance the loans "less attractive to the ratings agencies and investors."

Slave trade, basis of U.S. finance capital

NYT, 8/7 — As a result, in part because of cotton passing through the port, the Custom House in New York (now Federal Hall) generated the federal government's largest source of income by 1860. More goods were manufactured in the city than in the entire South. The city's hospitality industry depended on Southerners and their slaves....

City officials seriously contemplated secession as a free city-state as late as 1861, but once Southerners fired on Fort Sumter, resilient New York businessmen adapted. Manufacturers even successfully lobbied Congress to allow the purchase of cotton from the Confederacy to replace the shoddy uniforms they were making for Union troops.

MORE ITEMS AVAILABLE AT WWW.PLP.ORG

Elections: MEDIA AIMS TO BUILD FASCIST CONSENSUS



As the main-wing, finance capitalist bosses fend off attacks from both internal and inter-imperialist rivals, the U.S. presidential election has led them to drop much of the facade of liberal democracy—most obviously in the capitalist mass media.

While the candidates fill the airwaves arguing over who is the bigger racist, the election is accelerating the rise of fascism, the state of monopoly capitalism in decay, when the bosses can no longer rule in the old way. When pressed by growing competition from competing capitalists, they take more direct control of the state, both to discipline the smaller bosses and to attack the working class in preparation for war. To those ends, they need a tighter alignment between the media and the bosses' state.

In particular, the Hillary Clinton liberal imperialists are using Donald Trump's racism as a pretext to exert more direct state control over the election process. Trump is a figurehead who has floated to the front of the smaller, more domestically oriented bosses' racist movement, which was built on the hypocrisy of the big finance capitalists' racist history.

Bosses' Media Dumps on Trump

While both Clinton and Trump represent ruthless, racist bosses who will do anything to stay in power, Clinton's funders have more resources—not only more money, but more access to the levers of state power, including the mass media. Having concluded that they cannot work comfortably with Trump, they are using their apparatus to make his victory in November a long shot. The bosses' biggest newspapers, TV stations and websites are openly cheerleading for Clinton. "Journalistic objectivity," always a myth under capitalism, has gone completely out the window.

In May, New York Magazine published an anti-Trump article headlined, "Democracies Fail When They Are Too Democratic" (5/1). In June,

Salon.com—among others—called on the press to openly fight Trump: "Expose his tricks...Keep Trump off balance...Use his weakness against him" (6/2). In August, we saw the results: "[I]t has become almost impossible to separate coverage of the Trump campaign from attempts to tear it down. The media has long been accused of having a liberal slant, but in this cycle journalists seem to have cast themselves as defenders of the republic against what they see as a major threat" (Los Angeles Times, 8/2).

This phenomenon has been especially transparent in the New York Times, the main-wing bosses' foremost propaganda outlet. On Sunday, August 28, the Times' lead story—splashed across four columns at the top of the front page—highlighted the racist segregation in housing developments built by Trump and his father, dating back to the 1960s and 1970s. This was old news that had surfaced more than five years ago (Huffington Post, 4/29/11).

One week earlier, the Times detailed how overseas powers like Saudi Arabia donated tens of millions of dollars in exchange for access and possible influence at the U.S. State Department while Clinton was secretary of state. That article played on only one column on page one—below a story suggesting that Trump's business debts could make him beholden to the Bank of China, among other lenders.

**Capitalist Crisis and the Move
Toward Fascism**

As capitalist economies are failing right and left, fascist conditions are intensifying around the world. The bosses are moving relentlessly toward wider war. The U.S. is no exception, with the Clinton-led liberal bosses leading the charge. The democratically elected Turkish ruling class used the pretext of a failed coup to round up tens of thousands of workers and summarily fire tens of thousands more. Some may have been part of the aborted coup, but most were removed so that more "loyal" people could replace them.

We can't afford the illusion that the ruling class is targeting only the Trumpers. The rulers need fascism to preserve their floundering profit system; once they are done with the little bosses, they will come after the working class even harder. We can't predict the trajectory of rising fascism, or when it will become full-blown, but the trend is clear. We must understand that the trappings of democracy will prevail only as long as the bosses find them useful. As the capitalists' economy crumbles and inter-imperialist war spreads, they will jail and kill millions.

When will they stop? When the international working class, led by the revolutionary communist Progressive Labor Party, ends their system for good.☺

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